



# UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

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June 15, 2020

Greetings 4-H Families, Fairs and Partners,

We hope you are all remaining safe and healthy. We greatly miss seeing our 4-H families and partners in-person. As promised, we are updating you on the latest Maryland 4-H Program summer program decisions. Last week, the Governor announced that Maryland would gradually continue to progress within Stage Two of the [Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery](#) plan, with local jurisdictions deciding the timing of their re-openings. This stage also advises that Marylanders (a) stay home as much as possible, (b) telework wherever possible, (c) wear face coverings in public areas, (d) practice physical distancing, and (e) avoid crowds and close gatherings. This stage allows for limited youth activities for groups of 10 or less with strict public health protocols. Additionally, the Maryland State Department of Education has announced that schools may now begin engaging small groups, prioritizing summer instruction for vulnerable populations. These decisions have been guided by [public health data](#) and have been developed by [experts](#) and stakeholders in an effort to safely re-open our state.

After careful review of the guidance developed by the Governor's office, health and school officials, the [Maryland Department of Agriculture](#), along with key discussions with stakeholders, the University of Maryland Extension (UME) 4-H Program will take the following approach for summer programs:

1. Beginning August 1st, Maryland 4-H will gradually resume limited programs that meet the following standards:
  - a. 4-H activities comply with the appropriate local government jurisdiction for each stage of the state's reopening plan
  - b. The 4-H activity must be outdoors or within a facility that allows for physical distancing (at least 6 feet apart between each participant)
  - c. Group size must be 10 individuals or less (2 UME Volunteers + 8 or less youth/others)
  - d. Participants must maintain physical distancing throughout the event (at least 6 feet apart)
  - e. Participants must wear face coverings in accordance with [CDC guidance](#)
  - f. Hand hygiene must be available (sinks, soap/water, sanitizer, etc.)
  - g. Cleaning/disinfecting supplies must be available and high-touch materials, equipment and surfaces must be sanitized after each use
2. With regard to 4-H participation in August county fairs:
  - a. All in-person 4-H participation in August county fairs will be suspended unless they meet the standards detailed in #1. 4-H fair programs (including youth, volunteers and team members) must be in protected areas, away from the general public. 4-H team members, volunteers and youth who do not feel comfortable or are unable to participate in the fair due to health concerns, are not required to do so. 4-H team

members are permitted to support local fairs that choose to explore virtual options if there is the capacity to do so. We encourage continued communication between fairs and 4-H teams to discuss contingency plans, with the safety of youth, families, and our team as the top priority.

3. A decision on 4-H participation in September programs and fairs will be made by July 15th. We must plan for the possibility that September fairs and programs may be impacted.

These decisions are subject to change should there be health, safety, or implementation of protocol concerns. For the continued safety and well-being of 4-H families and volunteers, it is strongly recommended that 4-H activities continue in a virtual or distanced environment whenever possible.

We are currently working hard to refine the roadmap to restoring Maryland 4-H programming documents, which will be available for 4-H families and fairs in July. This will include the in-person program approval process along with protocols related to public health directives including participant size capacity, physical distancing, facility and equipment sanitization, risk exposure and mitigation, personal protective gear, contact tracing, staff/volunteer training and more. We will reassess our summer program decisions as our state government transitions between the stages of recovery.

The Governor and public health officials remind us that moving through stage two does not mean the crisis is behind and that we must remain cautious. We know that these circumstances have not been easy for our 4-H families and partners. We are grateful for your patience as we work towards gradually and responsibly resuming our in-person programs.

While COVID-19 has posed a new challenge for us, we have remained responsive to our community's needs in new and innovative ways. I am very grateful for our 4-H team and volunteers who have remained engaged in communities. I am also grateful for our 4-H youth who have continued to engage in service to meet their community's needs in safe and responsible ways. Your creativity and dedication to our program is very inspiring and a reminder that 4-H will continue to be relevant in communities across our state. We look forward to the day we can all gather safely together again!

Regards,

  
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